

3.1

Handout:

Using the Power of Storytelling

THE POWER OF STORYTELLING

Stories are a powerful way for people to connect with each other. This is especially true in marketing and sales where stories about companies with inspiring missions, successful products, and helpful solutions can compel a customer to take action.

At their core, most stories written for marketing and sales purposes have 3 key elements:



By telling a story with these 3 elements, readers will develop a personal interest in the main character, identify with their problem, and be interested in the solution they used to overcome it

FOR EXAMPLE:

1. My name's Steve and I love coffee - don't we all?

Here's an average person who's just like us...

2. But I saw after a while that coffee stained my teeth. I don't want yellow teeth, and I didn't know what to do.

...sharing a problem we might struggle with too..

3. I found ToothBright - it's a really easy kit you wear while you sleep. After just one week, my teeth looked great again.

...but he found a solution that I could try.

THINK ABOUT
HOW
YOU COULD CREATE
A SIMPLE STORY
THAT EXPLAINS
HOW
ONE OF YOUR CUSTOMERS
FACED A PROBLEM
AND SOLVED IT
WITH YOUR HELP.

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More elaborate stories might require more background and detail to resonate with the audience. In some cases, you might use a longer template that's very familiar to anyone who has read bedtime stories or watched movies lately.

THE HERO'S JOURNEY

- 1 Our main character - the hero - lives an ordinary life
- 2 Something unexpected happens, and the hero must do something about it
- 3 The hero knows it's dangerous but must accept this call to adventure
- 4 The hero meets a wise, older mentor who shares life-changing knowledge
- 5 The mentor might also give the hero a special tool or weapon which he must learn to control
- 6 Our hero faces a series of tests that expand his skills, and gains new allies that help him understand this new world
- 7 Meanwhile, an evil is rising - it's directly connected to the call to adventure our hero has responded to
- 8 Our hero may suffer a loss by facing the evil earlier than expected
- 9 When things seem darkest, our hero must decide whether or not to continue on his journey - and he does
- 10 Our hero faces the evil one last time and defeats it
- 11 With the evil defeated, our hero returns home to find his world has changed forever

If this structure seems familiar, think about many of the stories you may have heard, watched, or read: Star Wars, Cinderella, Lord of the Rings, The Matrix, The Lion King, or Homer's Odyssey. Go back and re-read the steps above and substitute a recent superhero movie or classic story and you may find it fits the template quite well.

NOTE: In these stories, very rarely is your company the hero. **Your customer** should be the hero - or identify strongly with the character. Your company may in fact serve as the “wise mentor” providing the life-changing knowledge or tool the hero needs to save the day - or solve the problem to change their life for the better.